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August 28, 2009

[Click here](#) to view Congressman Melancon's hurricane recovery page.

CHALMETTE, LA -U.S. Rep. Charlie Melancon (D-LA) today joined students, teachers, and residents of St. Bernard Parish in recognizing the fourth anniversary of Hurricane Katrina's landfall with the community's Annual Day of Reflection breakfast. The memorial event, hosted by the St. Bernard Parish School Board, was held this morning at Chalmette High School and is an opportunity for the community to remember the losses they suffered because of Hurricane Katrina and the levee failures, while also celebrating the rebuilding progress and unity of spirit evident in St. Bernard today.

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**"This weekend marks a solemn anniversary for the people of south Louisiana and the Gulf Coast," said Rep. Melancon. "Four years ago, a monster hurricane slammed into our coast, leaving hundreds of miles of destruction in its wake. But the even greater disaster, the disaster that made Katrina the worst catastrophe in U.S. history, began when the levees built to protect our homes and communities failed on a massive scale and the floodwaters poured in. Today we gather in this school, where almost 1500 people took refuge from Katrina and the floodwaters, to remember the many lives that were lost or irrevocably changed, the homes and memories that were washed away, and the scores of communities, like Chalmette, that were devastated by the levee failures.**

**"But today is also a day to celebrate the progress we have made individually and as a state in rebuilding what was lost to the storms. The people of south Louisiana have refused to allow their communities to be wiped off the map. What was once a slow trickle of pioneers returning to rebuild has grown to a flood of citizens and families eager to recreate the thriving communities they once called home."**

**"While the recovery has often seemed frustratingly slow and new roadblocks keep going up in our path, life is returning to normal, thanks to the determined and optimistic**

**spirit of the people of south Louisiana. Today we celebrate that spirit and recommit to building a better future for our families and communities.**

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**"In 2006, when St. Bernard held their first Annual Day of Reflection, I attended with a group of Congressmen and women who were visiting south Louisiana to see the progress of our recovery a year after Katrina and Rita.□ As we listened to the young people recall the heartbreak they had endured because of the storms, there was not a dry eye in the room.□ But we were also inspired by the students' love for St. Bernard, and their determination to persevere and rebuild their community.□ For many of the visiting members of Congress, meeting these young survivors was the most memorable experience of their three-day visit to the Gulf Coast.**

**"While much progress has been made since that first anniversary, we know our work is far from being done.□ As long as some of our coastal communities don't have the strengthened levees and comprehensive hurricane protection they need, our work is not done.□ As long as our wetlands are threatened and our coastline is washing away, our work is not done. And as long as our people face hurricane season with apprehension, instead of confidence, our work is not done.□ We in south Louisiana are proud Americans, and we will fight to protect our homes, our communities, and our way of life."**

Much of Louisiana's Third Congressional District suffered severe damage during Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. St. Bernard Parish in suburban New Orleans was almost entirely flooded when the levee system failed. While great progress has been made, the recovery is far from over.

To keep south Louisiana's hurricane recovery a national priority, for the past three years Rep. Melancon has partnered with Congressional leadership to lead annual multi-day working trips to the Gulf Coast. In 2006, 2007, and 2008, Rep. Melancon led Congressional delegations to south Louisiana to view the progress that has been made and learn how they could better help the region fully recover. While in Louisiana, these Representatives from states across the country toured local schools, sheriff's offices, health care clinics, levee projects, and the homes of people still rebuilding. During these visits, the members of Congress have had conversations with both local leaders and average citizens working to rebuild their communities - discussions that have been critical to maintaining national support for Louisiana's recovery

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